Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 179604
ORIGIN SS-15

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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179604

EXDIS ISLAMABAD FOR UNDERSECRETARY NEWSOM

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM PRETORIA DATED JULY 15, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC, USUN NEW YORK, BONN INFO LONDON,
OTTAWA, PARIS, DAR ES SALAAM, LUSAKA, GABORONE, GENEVA,
KHARTOUM, LAGOS, MAPUTO IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4013

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT/BONN PASS SECDEL

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA:SOUTH AFRICAN REACTION TO TALING POINTS
ON WALVIS BAY

REF: (A) USUN, 2913; (B) STATE 178548

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PAGE 02 STATE 179604

FOLLOWING IS PRETORIA FIVE'S AGREED REPORT ON MEETING OF JULY 15.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. THE PRETORIA CONTACT GROUP MET MINISTER PIK BOTHA
AT HIS HOUSE AT 1500 HOURS FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS THIS
AFTERNOON AND SPOKE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TALKING

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

POINTS PREAPRED BY THE NEW YORK CONTACT GROUP WITH TWO MINOR CHANGES REPORTED SEPARATELY.

2. BOTHA'S IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS TO SAY THAT IT WAS HIS "SAD DUTY" TON INFORM US THAT OUR STATED POSITION ON THE WALVIS BAY PROBLEM "TERMINATED THE WHOLE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN US." HE SAID THAT OUR VIEWS ON WALVIS BAY "DEVIATED SUBSTANTIALLY AND DRASTICALLY" FROM WHAT WE HAD REPEATEDLY TOLD THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE. THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO HOPE LEFT OF PROCEEDING WITH OUR PROPOSAL.

3. WE SAID THAT WE SHOULD BE VERY RELUCTANT TO REPORT TO OUR GOVERNMENTS THAT WE HAD REACHED THE END OF THE ROAD. WE COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS INTERPRETATION THAT WHAT WE HAD TOLD HIM REPRESENTED A DEVIATION FROM OUR PREVIOUS POSITION. WE EMPHASIZED THAT A RESOLUTION ON WALVIS BAY WOULD NOT BE RELATED EITHER TO THE LEGAL POSITION OR INDEED TO THE POSITION BEFORE INDEPENDENCE: WHAT WE WERE DISCUSSING WAS THE NEED TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS AFTER INDEPENDENCE. BOTHA ARGUED FORCIBLY THAT WE WERE INTRODUCING A NEW ELEMENT INTO THE PRO-POSALS WHICH WE HAD AGREED TO EXCLUDE FROM THEM, AND THAT IN DOING SO WE HAD BROKEN THE UNDERSTANDING ON WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL ON 25 APRIL HAD BEEN BASED. WE HOTLY DENIED THAT WE HAD CONFIDENTIAL

INTRODUCED THIS NEW ELEMENT: IT WAS INTRODUCED WHETHER WE LIKED IT OR NOT BY ALL THE OTHER PARTIES IN-VOLVED, INCLUDING THE INTERNAL POLITICAL PARTIES WITHIN NAMIBIA.

4. IN THE COURSE OF A PROLONGED AND SOMETIMES ACRIMONIOUS DISCUSSION, WE EMPHASIZED THE SEPARATION OF THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE FROM OUR NAMIBIA PROPOSAL. HE NEVERTHELESS ARGUED THAT, SUBJECT TO WHAT HIS GOVERNMENT MIGHT DE-CIDE, IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT THE EXCLUSION OF WALVIS BAY FORMED AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE PRESENTATION WHICH HE HAD MADE TO HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES BEFORE THEY HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL IN APRIL. IN THESE CIRCUM-STANCES HE WAS HONOR BOUND TO GO BACK TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND TO HIS COLLEAGUES TO SAY THAT OUR PRESENT POSITION DEVIATED FUNDAMENTALLY FROM THE PREVIOUS UNDER-STANDING AND THAT WE WERE NO LONGER NEUTRAL ON THIS POINT WHICH HAD GREAT SENSITIVITY FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. WE WERE IN FACT DRAGGING INTO THE DEBATE A MATTER AFFECTING SOUTH AFRICA'S SOVEREIGNTY.

5. WE MADE IT REPEATEDLY CLEAR THAT WHAT WE WERE SAYING WAS NOT DESIGNED TO INFRINGE SOUTH AFRICAN SOVEREIGNTY

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

SINCE WE HAD ADOPTED NO POSITION ON THE LEGAL ISSUE.
WHAT WE WERE SUPPORTING WAS THE NEED TO NEGOTIATE AFTER
INDEPENDENCE. THE FACT THAT WE SUPPORTED THE IDEA THAT
ULTIMATELY IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR NAMIBIA'S MAIN PORT
TO FORM PART OF THE TERRITORY OF AN INDEPENDNT NAMIBA
DID NOT AFFECT THE PRESENT JURIDICAL POSITION. THE ISSUES
RAISED IN OUR TALING POINTS HAD BEEN MENTIONED SEVERAL
TIMES TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND WOULD IN ANY CASE
INEVITABLYBE RAISED AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

6. BOTHA RETORTED THAT OUR PRESENT ATTITUDE ON WALVIS
BAY WAS SYMPTOMATIC OF THE APPROACH WHICH THE FIVE COULD
BE EXPECTED TO TAKE UNDE ANY PRESSURES WHICH MIGHT
ARISE DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR PROPOSAL.
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PAGE 04 STATE 179604

WHENEVER ANY AWKWARD QUESTION CAME UP, THE INTERPRETA-
TIONS OF THE WORDS IN THE AGREEMENT WOULD SIMILARLY
DEVIATE FROM THE INTENTION OF THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.
THUS THE WHOLE ISSUE OF THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE PROPOSAL
WAS NOW THROWN INTO QUESTION.

7. IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION BOTHA WAS AT TIMES
HIGHLY BOMBASTIC, SAYING FOR EXAMPLE THAT IF THE FIVE
WERE GOING TO SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION ON WALVIS BAY,
THEN HE COULD SAVE US THE TROUBLE OF GOING TO THE
SECURITY COUNCIL. "YOU COULD EVEN TAKE SOMETHING MORE
DRASTIC TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL AGAINST THE SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT." HE CLAIMED DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACT
THAT SWAPO HAD ACCEPTED THE FIVE'S PROPOSAL ON THE
SPECIFIC CONDITION THAT THE FIVE WOULD SUPPORT A WALVIS
BAY RESLUTION. HE DREW A PARALLEL WITH THE CASE OF
GIBRALTAR, BUT SAID THAT NO ONE WAS THREATENING BRITAIN
WITH SANCTIONS IF SHE DID NOT YIELD HER SOVEREIGNTY.

8. IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THE SEPARATION BETWEEN THE
WALVIS BAY ISSUE AND THE NAMIBIA PROPOSAL, WE ASKED
HIM TO CONFIRM THAT THE SAG'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRO-
POSAL STILL STANDS AND THAT HIS DISAGREEMENT WAS LIMITED
TO WALVIS BAY. HE REPEATED THAT, SUBJECT TO WHAT HIS
GOVERNMENT DECIDED, HE REGARDED THE BASIS AS HAVING
CHANGED, AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO RECONSIDER THEIR AC-
CEPTANCE. HE REFUSED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT
THE FIVE'S PROPOSAL WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE NEGOTI-
TION OF THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE COULD ARISE.

9. AT THE END OF THE DISCUSSION WE MADE AN EARNEST
PLEA THAT HE SHOULD TREAT THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE IN A
WIDER PERSPECTIVE. THE FIVE HAVE TRIED ALL ALONG TO
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Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

KEEP IN MIND THAT WHAT WAS AT STAKE WAS THE PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE NAMIBIA PROBLEM AND THE IMPLICATION THIS WOULD HAVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA AND THE REST OF THE REGION. WE ALSO STRESSED THAT WE SHOULD NOT IGNORE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPPORT OF THE FRONTLINE STATES FOR OUR PROPOSAL, WHICH HAD IN FACT PRESENTED THEM WITH MANY PROBLEMS.

10. WHEN WE RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE SAID TO THE PRESS, BOTHA AT FIRST SAID THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP SECRET WHAT WE HAD TOLD HIM. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO SAY HOW THEY REGARDED OUR APPROACH AND, IF NECESSARY, WE COULD RESPOND BY PUTTING OUR OWN POINT OV VIEW. WE URGED ON HIM THAT OUR COMMUNICATION HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL AND THAT BY PUTTING WORDS INTO OUR MOUTHS, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO A RESOLUTION ON WALVIS BAY, HE WOULD RUN THE RISK OF WRECKING THE ENTIRE NEGOTIATION. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, BOTHA AGREED THAT HE WOULD SAY MERELY THAT HE HAD RECEIVED FROM US A REPORT ON THE LUANDA TALKS AND THAT HE WOULD SAY NOTHING FURTHER TO THE PRESS WITHOUT INFORMING US. HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH MR. VORSTER THIS EVENING AND WOULD PROBABLY GET IN TOUCH WITH US AGAIN ON MONDAY.

11. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BOTHA'S ATTITUDE BECAME SOMEWHAT MORE RECEPTIVE TOWARDS THE END OF OUR DISCUSSION, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ASSESS WHETHER HE, AND STILL MORE MR. VORSTER, WILL REGARD OUR SUPPORT FOR A WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION AS A BREAKING POINT. WHICHEVER WAY THE FINAL RESULT COMES OUT, WE WOULD REGARD THE SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION AS BEING PRECARIOUSLY BALANCED. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT THE FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS SHOULD CONSIDER AT THEIR MEETING IN BONN, WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE, AN URGENT APPEAL EITHER FROM THEM OR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO PRIME MINISTER VORSTER NOT TO

DESTROY WHAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED AND THEREBY THROW AWAY A VITAL OPPORTUNITY TO REACH AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBA AND ALL OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.
EDMONDEON UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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